

But among all the resources on which Britain was able to draw, in her efforts to meet the challenge of the U-boats, none deserves to be placed higher than the courage and devotion of our merchant seamen and fishermen. These proved to be of a quality far beyond the calculations of the German Admiralty.

The enemy unquestionably reckoned on being able by a campaign of frightfulness to intimidate our sailors from putting to sea. No other explanation is possible of the numerous cases of *German 'frightfulness'* brutality and outrage that were perpetrated—presumably by express order of the High Command—against defenceless men after their vessels had been torpedoed and sunk. The firing on and scuttling of open boats at sea, the triumphant proclamation of ships "*spuriös versenkt*"—sunk without trace, their whole crews being drowned mercilessly—were all intended to shake the morale of British seamen and make them unwilling to sign on for further voyages. But in this object the German Navy was completely unsuccessful.

I remember meeting an old sea-captain on board the boat in which I was returning from France after one of our Inter-Allied Conferences during the War. I asked him what he was doing there, and the grizzled skipper told me he had just been torpedoed for, I think, the sixth time, and was now making his way back to Liverpool to take charge of another

ship and face the U-boats once again.

In a letter written to me on 25th October, 1917, the late Havelock Wilson, Secretary of the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, said :—

" We have a very large number of the members of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union who have